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RUNGE, YEVGENY Y.

## RUNGE A WINDFALL FOR CIA

Defection of Soviet Colonel  
Keyed the Arrest of 5 in Bonn

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WASHINGTON — The defection of Lt. Col. Yevgeny Y. Runge, a 39-year-old Soviet intelligence officer, is regarded as a windfall by U.S. intelligence officials.

They are utilizing the case to pursue a three-fold objective: to expose what they consider a new emphasis on the use of "illegal" agents in Soviet espionage, to promote closer cooperation among Western security services and to counteract what they consider the tendency of some U.S. officials, intent on "building bridges" to the Soviet Union, to minimize Soviet espionage practices.

Runge, an ethnic German from the Ukraine, defected last month. He took with him his wife, Walentina, and their 7-year-old son, Andrei, after having posed 11 years as a vending-machine dealer in West Germany as a cover for his espionage activities.

As a result of his defection, five of his subordinates have been apprehended in West Germany. The information he supplied led to the apprehension or surveillance of at least 20 more agents, and the trail may eventually lead to the United States.

## TALKING FREELY

Intelligence officers here and in western Europe regard the Runge case as unique because, they say, the spy's disclosures have so incriminated his subordinates that they are talking freely. In other cases it was the subordinates who first defected and then exposed senior officers, such as Col. Rudolf I. Abel, who was arrested in New York in 1957, and Gordon A. Lonsdale, in Britain.

These two maintained a tight-lipped silence during years of imprisonment until they were exchanged for western agents held in the Soviet Union.

Equally significant is the intimate glimpse that Runge's defection provides into the warfare waged between the Soviet and U.S. espionage establishments. Most defectors are kept hidden by the Central Intelligence Agency for months, even years, while they provide information. After all the information possible has been gleaned, the defector is allowed to resettle with a new name and identity.

## 'ILLEGAL' AGENTS

Fortunately for the CIA, Runge's defection coincided with a desire of at least some U.S. intelligence officials to counter the international attention, much of it favorable, surrounding the Soviet Union's 50th anniversary. It also gave U.S. intelligence men a chance to focus public attention on what they consider a growing emphasis on the use of "illegal" Soviet agents around the world.

Although there is no agreement, the CIA and the Soviet intelligence apparatus attempt to keep the number of their respective "legal" agents—those attached to embassies or official missions—in rough balance. These agents are generally known.

But agents who enter a foreign country illegally and operate secretly under disguise, are another problem. These agents are what intelligence officials call "illegals."

## THEIR SYSTEM

U.S. intelligence officials insist that they do not use this type of agent and that, unlike the Soviet Union, they have no spies who are trained for years and then reside abroad under assumed names and nationalities. What the U.S. intelligence apparatus does use, they say, is "indigenous" agents, who are citizens of another country working for the United States.

Undoubtedly, Runge's defection has been useful to Western intelligence in drawing attention to an expansion of the Soviet Union's "illegal" network. His importance as a purveyor of information is less clear.

Some western intelligence officers consider him on a par with Abel and Lonsdale. Others, knowledgeable about intelligence practices, openly wonder why Runge would have been surfaced so quickly and discussed so thoroughly if he were indeed of that caliber.

## BEING EXPANDED

Runge is reported to have told his interrogators that the "illegal" network is being expanded especially in areas with effective counterintelligence services such as the United States, Japan, the British Commonwealth and western Europe.

In publicizing the Runge case, intelligence officials here disavow any desire of reviving the "cold war" mentality. But they are evidently concerned about some State department officials who are so intent on steps to improve relations with the Soviet Union by stressing such "positive" steps as increased trade, space and nuclear control accords, and periodic consultations on such matters as the potential threat from China that they advocate minimizing news of such "negative" factors as espionage and defections.

Against this background, Runge's successful career as an "illegal" in West Germany is being presented by the intelligence community here as support for assertions that "hundreds" of such agents are at work in the United States and in other countries.

These sources also fear that the security agencies of other Western countries have not sufficiently recognized the threat posed by "illegal" agents.

## DON'T SEE THREAT

Elements in the intelligence community have long believed that some U.S. political officials in their desire to "build bridges" have underestimated hostile aspects of Soviet policy, including espionage.

These sources also fear that the security agencies of other Western countries have not sufficiently recognized the threat posed by "illegal" agents.

"Illegals now form the bigger part of Soviet intelligence," a senior U.S. official remarked.

Runge's own decision to defect began to take shape last July and August when, according to the account he is reported to have given U.S. interrogators, he and his family returned from West Germany to the Soviet Union for a vacation at an intelligence officers' retreat at Gelendzhik, a Black Sea resort in the Caucasus, and in preparation for a new assignment.

It was then that he and his strong-willed wife began debating the life they had led for 11 years in West Germany as Mr. and Mrs. Willi Kurt Gast, "illegal" agents in charge of two espionage rings. Although they had been successful in stealing secret Western documents and had been decorated for their work, the Runge family began to question their future as spies.

## LEARN ENGLISH

In Moscow they learned that their next assignment would involve learning English, the acquisition of a new legend—false names and personal backgrounds—and eventually separation from their son, who would be left behind in a Moscow boarding school.

The Runge family have given other reasons for their defection: weariness with their clandestine life, the ever-present fear of detection, irritation with the bureaucracy of the Soviet intelligence apparatus, and the softening effect of long life in the West.

The interrogators believe that the thought of leaving their son was the principal reason for their defection.

With the decision made, Runge took advantage of an opportunity to photograph his personnel file to obtain proof of his identity to show Western intelligence agents.

In appearance Runge is a perfect "illegal," able to blend into any west European or North American crowd. He has no distinguishing marks or scars. He stands 5 feet 8 inches tall, weighs 165 pounds, his dark curly hair worn short, and his intelligent brown eyes.